

Lindsay Mathews
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Appropriations Committee – DDS

Thank you to the co-chairs, Senator Osten, Senator Formica, and Representative Walker, and esteemed members of the Appropriations Committee.

I am speaking to you today because the Governor has proposed \$25 million in budget cuts that, if enacted, reflects once and for all, the idea that people who were born with more physical, mental and medical needs than the rest of again get pushed to the back of the line.

I am George Griffin's Mother. My name is Lindsay Mathews, and I am the Mother who filed the lawsuit against the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

In the lawsuit, I am seeking an order barring DDS from taking away George's professional State caregivers - who have become family to him --- and replacing them with highly exploited, less trained "substitutes" who are paid less than half the cost of living in CT.

The Governor's budget, again, largely relies on privatizing group homes. He wants us to believe that he is saving the State money, however, he has never made that cost analysis public and in fact, it is false.

Cutting desperately needed services to people who can't speak for themselves is as wrong as the idea of slavery once was - and it is discriminatory.

And yet, the Governor seems to cling to the idea that budget cuts to people who cannot speak directly TO him don't understand the meaning of what he is trying to DO to them. He clings to this idea as if he is clinging to life itself.

Many of our children in public care are among the 8,832 people in CT with LON scores between 5 and 8. This is a special group because they often have complex medical problems and need highly skilled caregivers.

We all know that we are only listened to when there are thousands of us speaking with one voice. And, uniquely most of those thousands you need to hear from cannot speak, write or call. That is why we are here tonight. We are here for them, our families and ourselves.

I believe that it is our moral responsibility to put those who need it most first in the State's budget this year and for every year to come.

The obvious solution is to fully fund DDS. I urge you to do the right thing and create something that works and that we can be proud of. The cuts requested in the Governor's budget for people with

developmental disabilities are totally inappropriate and have no connection to taking us in a positive direction.

For this reason, I ask that you take the lead and do what you know is right.